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7PM-SOVIET TROOPS:440

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BOISE, IDAHO (AP) - U.S. INTELLIGENCE SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THE EXISTENCE IN CUBA OF SOVIET COMBAT TROOPS - POSSIBLY SOME 2,300 TO 3,000 MEN; SAYS SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS CHAIRMAN SEN. FRANK CHURCH. CHURCH THURSDAY CALLED ON PRESIDENT CARTER TO INSIST ON IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRIGADE OF GROUND-COMBAT TROOPS.

"THE UNITED STATES CANNOT PERMIT THE ISLAND TO BECOME A RUSSIAN MILITARY BASE, 90 MILES FROM OUR SHORES; NOR CAN WE ALLOW CUBA TO BE USED AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR RUSSIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE," CHURCH SAID.

CHURCH, AN IDAHO DEMOCRAT, SAID HE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE HEARD REPORTS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO OF A SOVIET TROOP BUILDUP IN CUBA. HE SAID MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AGREED TO SAY NOTHING UNTIL THE REPORTS WERE CONFIRMED.

CHURCH SAID SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE CALLED HIM THURSDAY TO CONFIRM THE BUILDUP. HE SAID "AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE UNITS" CONFIRMED EXISTENCE OF THE SOVIETS, BUT HE SAID HE COULD NOT DISCLOSE THE TYPE OF OPERATION INVOLVED.

CHURCH SAID HE WAS ADVISED BY VANCE THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN ASKED FOR A FULL EXPLANATION. ASKED WHY THE RUSSIANS WERE PLACING TROOPS IN CUBA, CHURCH SAID: "THAT'S ONE OF THE QUESTIONS WE HAVE ASKED THE SOVIET EMBASSY."

RUSSIA HAS HAD MILITARY ADVISERS IN CUBA UNDER AGREEMENTS REACHED SHORTLY AFTER THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS OF 1962. BUT CHURCH SAID THEY ARE THERE FOR TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME RUSSIA HAS PLACED COMBAT-TYPE TROOPS IN CUBA, HE SAID, ADDING: "... OUR CONCERN FOR DEPLOYMENT OF RUSSIAN COMBAT TROOPS IN THIS HEMISPHERE SHOULD BE APPARENT.

"IT IS ONE THING FOR RUSSIANS TO ENGAGE IN SUCH ACTIVITIES IN PLACES LIKE ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA. IT IS QUITE ANOTHER THING TO MOVE INTO WHAT ALWAYS HAS BEEN REGARDED AS OUR OWN FRONT YARD."

CHURCH SAID THE TYPE OF TROOPS INVOLVED, GROUND COMBAT UNITS, ALSO CONCERNED HIM.

ON AUG. 7, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SAID "THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A VERY MODEST INCREASE" IN THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA. U.S. INTELLIGENCE SOURCES SAID THEN THAT ESTIMATES INDICATED 2,000 MILITARY ADVISERS AND BETWEEN 4,000 AND 6,000 CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS AND ADVISORY PERSONNEL WERE IN CUBA.

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT HAD NO IMMEDIATE COMMENT ON CHURCH'S REPORT.

CHURCH SAID THE PRESENCE OF RUSSIAN GROUND TROOPS DID NOT POSE THE THREAT OF THE 1962 MISSILE BUILDUP. BUT, HE SAID: "THE PRESIDENT MUST MAKE IT CLEAR, WE DRAW THE LINE ON RUSSIAN PENETRATION OF THIS HEMISPHERE."

AP-NY-08-31 0424EDT